

METHOD FOR CONTAINING LIGHTWEIGHT MATERIALS

RELATED APPLICATION

Reference is made to my copending provisional application for letters
5 patents serial number 60/464,748, filed April 24, 2003, to which a claim of
priority is made.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to the field of collapsible containers, and
more particularly to an improved method for bulk packaging of lightweight
10 particulate material, typically edible grains and flakes for shipment to a packaging
location where the same are packaged for individual sale.

In the prior art, containers used for this purpose have been manufactured
in planar form, including a lid or cover to be assembled on sight for loading, a
time consuming process, of a large number of units which must be assembled,
15 including the lid, prior to loading to occupy a considerable amount of space
within the loading plant until needed. Because of problems of sanitation, it is
known to provide a separate liner, usually of synthetic resinous material, which is
placed within the box prior to filling the liner which is subsequently sealed prior to
closing the container. Because the loaded container normally weighs only several
20 hundred pounds, the container may be made of relatively lightweight materials
and is discarded after a single use.

It is known in the packaging art to provide collapsible reusable containers for use with relatively heavier-weight contents, the same being relatively expensive to manufacture, although offering the convenience of reusability.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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Briefly stated, the invention contemplates the provision of an improved relatively lightweight collapsible container for one time usage which, in collapsed condition, occupies a relatively small storage space, but which is readily erected for filling using a sanitary inner liner and which is filled after positioning the liner within the erected container to be subsequently sealed after filling. The containers and liners are readily stored in stacked and/or spooled condition, in the case of the liners, for assembly at a filling station immediately prior to filling to permit rapid processing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings, to which reference will be made in the specification, similar reference characters have been employed to designate corresponding parts
5 throughout the several views.

Figure 1 is a schematic view showing an assembly and loading station embodying the invention.

Figure 2 is a schematic sectional view showing a loaded container embodying the invention.

10 Figure 3 is a schematic view in elevation of a collapsible container element.

Figure 4 is a schematic top plan view of a reinforcing element.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCLOSED EMBODIMENT

In accordance with the invention, and with reference to Figure 1 in the drawing, reference character 10 designates a filling station for particulate materials, including a stack of collapsed containers 11, a source of synthetic resinous liner elements 12, as well as a hopper element 15 of known type which dispenses on demand particulate contents, such as cereal grains, corn or bran flakes, and the like (not shown). Reference character 15 designates an erected container having an open liner element 16 and a lid or cover 17.

10 The containers 11 are of known type, and reference is made to U.S. Patent No. 4,596, 355 dated June 24, 1986 and granted to Julius B. Kupersmit, this patent disclosing and describing a collapsible container of the type required, although the presently employed containers are made of lighter weight materials and do not require the details of reinforcement disclosed for the present purposes.

15 The stack 11 comprising individual containers 20, including a collapsible section 21 having side walls one of which is indicated by reference character 22, end walls 23 as well as fold lines 24 which permit folding of the collapsible section 21 above a horizontal fold line 25 which forms a storage section 26 for a reinforcing insert 27 (Figure 4). The bottom of the container 20 may be provided

with a suitable slip sheet 28 of fibrous or synthetic resinous material, as is known in the art.

5 The reinforcing element 27 includes rigid side walls 30, as well as end walls, 31, each of which is provided with an axially-positioned vertical fold line 22 to enable the same to be folded to planar condition and stored in the recess 26, again as known in the art. When in collapsed condition, the containers are shipped with the lid or cover 17 in position to provide a rectangular enclosure enabling convenient stacking.

10 Operation of the method will be apparent from a consideration of Figure 1. Prior to commencement of operation, the stack of collapsed containers 11 is positioned adjacent the hopper element, and a stack or roll of synthetic resinous liner elements 12 may be positioned on an opposite side of the hopper element.

15 With the commencement of operation, the uppermost container element in the stack is moved therefrom to be erected beneath the hopper element, and a liner element is subsequently positioned in the open mouth of the erected container. The container is then filled to a predetermined level, following which the open mouth of the liner element is closed, or preferably heat sealed to maintain the
20 contents in sanitary condition until and during shipment. The placing of the lid upon the sealed liner element encloses the container, the lid being maintained in

closed condition by known clips (not known), taping, or other convenient means. The loading cycle is then repeated. As the supply of collapsed containers or liner elements is exhausted, they may be replaced as required.

5 By use of the present method, it is possible to eliminate the necessity of prior manual assembly of boxes which are manufactured in planar form, and which must be assembled, as contrasted with merely erected, in advance and wherein it is possible to have only a relatively small number of assembled boxes and lids in the area of the filling station at any one time, thus substantially
10 reducing the amount of manual labor which must be expended in the area of the filling station. By employing lightweight materials in the manufacture of the collapsible containers, the cost of manufacture is significantly reduced, permitting the discarding of the container after a single use, without the necessity of a return shipment of empty containers for refilling.

15 I wish it to be understood that I do not consider the invention to be limited to the precise details of structure illustrated and described in the specification, for obvious modifications will occur to those skilled in the art to which the invention pertains.

I claim: